

The Hub

Palo Alto VA Spinal Cord Injury Peer Support Group
3801 Miranda Avenue/128
Palo Alto, CA 94304



Summary:

Mission Statement: Veterans helping veterans through experience.

- ◆ We motivate each other through greater self-empowerment and increased community involvement.
- ◆ We pool experiences regarding life with disability, sharing strategies for the newly injured and providing new perspective for the long term injured.
- ◆ We share collective experience to troubleshoot particular questions sent by SCI Veterans unable to attend the group meetings.
- ◆ We provide input and feedback to the SCI Center to improve the services available to all SCI Veterans
- ◆ We offer collaboration with Stanford University's Mechanical engineering program to develop needed adaptive devices.

Objective: The objective is to establish a peer support group for the Palo Alto Department of Veterans Affairs Spinal Cord Injury Center linking newly injured veterans with seasoned, post injured veterans. Additionally, there is need for a cyber-assisted plan reaching out to many of our veterans unable to attend regular meetings.

Methodology: We have imitated a series of meetings, held bi-monthly in the PAVA Dining Room at the Noon meal for the SCI patients. A featured speaker gives a presentation related to SCI, approximately forty minutes. A fifteen minute question and answer period follows. Currently we are linking with Santa Clara County Medical Center Peer Support to widen our audiences.

Stakeholder Input: Meetings are normally open to the staff of the SCI Center and some staff members are presenters on topics such as bowel and bladder management, diet, personal caregiver hiring and management. Occasionally, staff members will be excluded from the meetings so that feedback from in and out patients can be received regarding their medical care and concerns related to the hospital policies and procedures. Reports regarding problems are then transmitted back to hospital staff in an anonymous fashion for the patient.

Future Projection:

- ❖ **Santa Clara Valley Medical Peer Support Group** - We've had great success in mutual presentations with Santa Clara Valley Medical Center and plan to proceed sharing our broadcasts with theirs on the third Tuesday of every month from 6:30 - 8:00 PM.
- ❖ **Remote Veterans** - We plan on connecting our veterans that are in remote areas, homebound and bed rest with our program through the internet using Google+ which allows a window for questions and answers.
- ❖ **Around the VISN** - We plan on recruiting spokes of our VISN to institute peer support groups of their own and meet with us periodically to compare problems and solutions.

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